



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office Significant Activities Report

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Great Lakes Plan Released

Great Lakes Strategy 2002: A Plan for the New Millennium was officially released on April 2, 2002. USEPA Administrator Christie Whitman announced the Strategy in Muskegon, Michigan on behalf of the U.S. Policy Committee. She was joined by sev-



USEPA Administrator Christie Whitman Announces Great Lakes Strategy in Muskegon, MI after Introduction by Great Lakes National Program Manager, Tom Skinner

eral U.S. Policy Committee members.

The Strategy presents a basin-wide vision for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. It identifies the major basin-wide environmental issues in the Great Lakes and establishes common goals that Federal, State, and Tribal agencies will work toward. The Strategy was created to help coordinate and streamline the efforts of the many agencies involved with protecting the Great Lakes. It will help improve programs that fulfill United States responsibilities described in the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

The Strategy was developed cooperatively by the U.S. Policy Committee, a forum of senior-level representatives from Federal, State, and Tribal natural resource management agencies and environmental protection agencies. It is the culmination of a 3-year long effort, which included an extensive public comment process. Public workshops were held throughout the basin in Duluth, Chicago, Detroit and Niagara Falls. Additional comments were received in response to a ***Federal Register*** notice. This input helped refine the document and developed a shared, long-range vision for the Great Lakes.

The U.S. Policy Committee will use the Strategy to guide protection and restoration activities over the next several years. The implementation of the Strategy will be tracked by measuring progress toward the various goals identified in the document. Progress will also be judged by tracking the many specific actions that are listed. Infor-

Vision for the Great Lakes

- The Great Lakes Basin is a healthy natural environment for wildlife and people.
- All Great Lakes beaches are open for swimming.
- All Great Lakes fish are safe to eat.
- The Great Lakes are protected as a safe source of drinking water.

mation on environmental progress will continue to be provided by the State of the Lake Ecosystem Conference, Lakewide Management Plans, and other programs.

The Strategy can be found online at: <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/gls/index.html>.

The release of *Great Lakes Strategy 2002* was met with great interest by the electronic and print media throughout the United States, Canada, and even England. Newspapers and Web Sites in the United States from Michigan to Georgia; from New York to San Francisco; and many points in between covered the story. International coverage included outlets in Toronto and London, in Canada, as well as London in the United Kingdom. News articles can be viewed at: http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/gls/glstrat_news.html. (Contact: Vicki Thomas, 312-886-6942, thomas.vicki@epa.gov)

Progress Reports on Lakes

USEPA and Environment Canada announced that progress reports on Lakewide Management Plans, or LaMPs, for Lakes Superior, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario are available. The update on the Lake Huron Initiative has also been completed. The LaMPs, originally released in April of 2000, presented a strategic ecosystem management plan for restoration and protection of the lakes. They also outlined the environmental status of each lake, highlighted suc-

cesses, identified problems and presented proposed recommendations and actions to achieve specific lake objectives. Applying an adaptive management approach to addressing the needs of the LaMPs, progress reports are issued every two years to report on activities and successes and to address continuing challenges.

**Highlights from LaMP Progress Reports:**

- The 2002 Progress Report on **Lake Superior** focuses on progress in achieving zero discharge of nine critical pollutants, on habitat restoration, and on the development of broad ecosystem goals. (Contact: Elizabeth LaPlante, 312-353-2694, laplante.elizabeth@epa.gov)
- The **Lake Michigan** report specifies activities that must be undertaken in order for the lake quality to be rated "Good" by the year 2020, and describes initial results from the Lake Michigan Mass Balance Project. An additional Lake Michigan document, *Habitat and Land Use Management Toolbox*, will be issued at the same time as the progress report. (Contact: Judy Beck, 312-353-3849, beck.judy@epa.gov)
- **Lake Huron** reports on contaminated sediment dredging and remediation activities in Saginaw Bay, environmental indicators, and the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) decision-support system to better manage important tributary habitat. (Contact: James

Schardt, 312-353-5085, schardt.james@epa.gov)

- The **Lake Erie** report includes a vision for the future of the lake and the latest information on changes in aquatic life, fisheries and habitats. (Contact: Dan O'Riordan, 312- 312-886-7981, oriordan.daniel@epa.gov)
- **Lake Ontario** reports on adoption of ecosystem indicators for the lake; beneficial use impairments; current status of levels of critical pollutants; sources and loadings of critical pollutants; and trackdown/remedial actions in the watershed. (Contact: Barbara Belasco, 212-637-3848, belasco.barbara@epa.gov)

Links to the reports can be found on EPA's Great Lakes web site, <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/lakes.html>.

Major Lake Ontario Study Begun

The *R/V Lake Guardian*, the largest pollution monitoring vessel on the Great Lakes, departed from Rochester, New York on April 13th for a week of collecting samples of air and water in Lake Ontario as part of the Lake Ontario Air Deposition Study, or LOADS. Scientists from the USEPA and three universities will study the levels of mercury, PCBs, dioxins, mirex, and DDE in



Scientists Deploy Air Monitoring Equipment from the *R/V Lake Guardian*

the air over the lake and in the water. These pollutants can affect fish and other aquatic life in the lake, and the safety of eating fish caught in the lake.

At the same time, a land-based collection site is operating at Sterling, New York, to collect wet and dry deposition for the next seven months. Results from this station will later be correlated with those obtained on the *Lake Guardian*.



Air Monitoring Station at Sterling, New York

USEPA scientists also sampled the Black River, Salmon River, Oswego River, Genessee River, and Eighteenmile Creek using a small boat. The water samples collected will be tested for PCBs, mirex, mercury, DDT, dieldrin and dioxin.

Another cruise on the *Lake Guardian* will take place in September of this year to capture seasonal variations in temperature and rainfall. The data obtained will be used to assist the Lake Ontario Lakewide Management Plan in reducing pollutant loads to the lake.

The **objectives** of LOADS are to:

1. Estimate loadings of these pollutants for use in the Lake Ontario Mass Balance Model,
2. Assess any differences in concentrations and deposition over land versus over wa-

ter,

3. Determine the effect of urban areas on deposition to the Lake, and
4. Investigate the sources and source regions of deposition to Lake Ontario.

LOADS is being managed by USEPA Region 2 and Clarkson University, with assistance from SUNY Oswego, SUNY Fredonia, Environment Canada, University of Michigan, USEPA Region 5 and the Great Lakes National Program Office. (Contact: Barbara Belasco, 212-637-3848, belasco.barbara@epa.gov)

Spring Fever



White Asters

USEPA's annual booth at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show, March 9 - 17, 2002, was more popular than ever. This year was an all-time record for visitors to the show (over 150,000) and to USEPA's booth, helped along by a new central booth location. We distributed USEPA fact sheets including Landscaping with Native Plants and state-specific lists with native plants and resources. We handed out anywhere from 1,000 copies (Minnesota fact sheets) to nearly 10,000 copies (Illinois fact sheets).

USEPA's Greenacres Web Page also had a record month in March. The Green Landscaping with Native Plants web site, <http://www.epa.gov/greenacres>



www.epa.gov/greenacres, had approximately 48,000 visitors. Popular points of entry were the front page, <http://www.epa.gov/greenacres>, and the pages of the Wild Ones Handbook, <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/wildones>, with 12,000 visits to each of those areas during the month. (Contact: Danielle Green, 312-886-7594, green.danielle@epa.gov)

Lake Guardian Gets Busy

The Great Lakes National Program Office's research ship, the *R/V Lake Guardian* went into full operation for the year. (The 180-foot *Lake Guardian* is the largest government research ship on the Great Lakes.)

- On March 30th, it began the Spring Water Quality Survey of the all of the Great



USEPA Administrator Whitman and Members of U.S. Policy Committee Tour *R/V Lake Guardian* in Muskegon, MI on April 2, 2002

Lakes. The Spring Survey will run through May 6th. Because of unusual conditions (high turbidity) encountered in Lake Erie on the first pass through, the lake will be sampled a second time in late April. Samples in this annual monitoring program are being taken to assess the chemical and biological health of the Great Lakes.

(Contact: Glenn Warren, warren.glenn@epa.gov, 312-886-2405)

- On April 2nd, the *Lake Guardian* was in Muskegon, Michigan as part of the announcement of the Great Lakes Strategy (see related story in this issue). (Contact: Paul Horvatin, 312-353-3612, horvatin.paul@epa.gov)

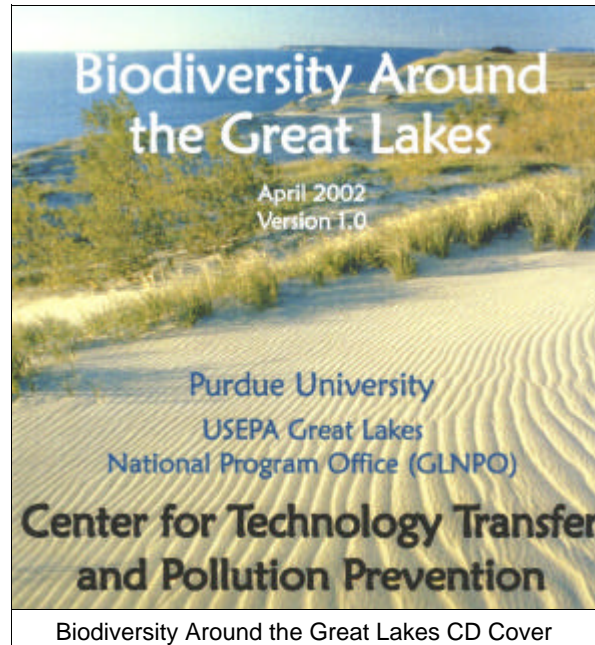


Lake Guardian in Rochester, NY to Prepare for Lake Ontario Atmospheric Deposition Study

- On April 13th, the ship was in Rochester, New York, preparing for the Lake Ontario Atmospheric Deposition Study (see related story in this issue). Despite the pouring rain, TV and newspaper reporters turned out to interview scientists as they loaded and prepared their sampling equipment. (Contact: Barbara Belasco, 212-637-3848, belasco.barbara@epa.gov)
- On Earth Day, April 22nd, the *Lake Guardian* was in Fort Niagara at the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario. Despite weather for all seasons (rain, sleet, and snow during the day), the event re-

ceived extensive local media coverage. (Contact: George Ison, 312-353-1669, ison.george@epa.gov.)

Biodiversity CD Released



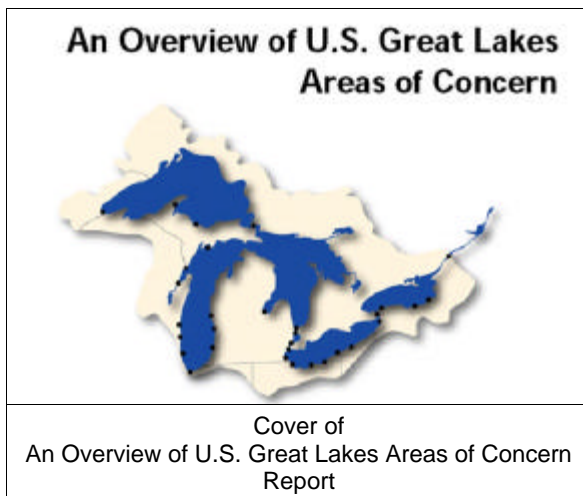
The Great Lakes National Program Office and its cooperator, Purdue University, working in partnership with the Region 5 Software Development Section, have released a new educational software program, ***Biodiversity Around the Great Lakes***. Released just in time for Earth Day, the CD-ROM based program is intended to introduce advanced junior high through high school students, as well as the general public, to the concepts of biodiversity generally, and the biodiversity of the Great Lakes in particular. It incorporates a tour of Great Lakes Biodiversity Investment Areas, a guide to 401 Great Lakes plant and animal species, and numerous multimedia enrichment clips. (Contact: Bob Beltran, 312-353-0826, beltran.robert@epa.gov)

The Biodiversity Software proved a very popular item at Chicago's Earth Day 2002

festivities in Lincoln Park. Despite the frigid temperatures, the event was well attended. (Danielle Green 312-886-7594, green.danielle@epa.gov)

Copies of the software are available from the Great Lakes National Program Office by contacting Larry Brail, 312-886-7474, brail.lawrence@epa.gov.

Areas of Concern Featured



A new publication entitled *An Overview of U.S. Great Lakes Areas of Concern* is now available from the Great Lakes National Program Office. The document features summaries of the 31 U.S. and binational Areas of Concern, or AOCs, in the Great Lakes. The AOCs include rivers, lakes and bays where one or more of 14 beneficial uses have been impaired due to historic or ongoing pollution.

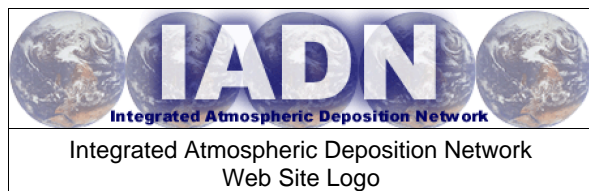
The summaries were compiled by the Great Lakes Commission through a cooperative agreement with the Great Lakes National Program Office. The document reviews the background and status of each Remedial Action Plan, or RAP, beneficial use impairments, progress and achievements, community involvement, partner agencies and organizations, research, and publications pro-

duced by RAP partners. The RAP is a plan for how to restore the health of the Area of Concern. The overview also lists key contacts for each AOC. The summaries are intended for local residents, agency staff, elected officials and others interested in learning about the status of cleanup efforts in the Great Lakes basin's most polluted water bodies.

The 254-page publication is available by request from Larry Brail, 312-886-7474, brail.lawrence@epa.gov. It is also available online in PDF format via the Great Lakes Commission website publications link, <http://www.glc.org/docs/respol.html>. Individual AOC information can be viewed online in html format at <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc>. Links to RAP partners and other AOC-related information can be accessed through these websites.

Air Monitoring Caucus

The Integrated Atmospheric Deposition Network (IADN) Steering Committee met in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario on April 3rd and 4th to discuss events leading up to IADN's next implementation period, which will begin in 2005. In order to ensure the continued scientific integrity of this binational air monitoring program, a peer review of the program will be held in conjunction with a Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) meeting in November 2002 in Salt Lake City, Utah. In preparation for the peer review, a technical summary of the IADN program, which will cover topics including history, methods, chemicals monitored, results to date, and research related to IADN, will be prepared



by the Steering Committee. The group's goal is to finalize the next installment of the monitoring plan by the end of 2004.

During the Steering Committee meeting, IADN researchers made presentations on passive air samplers, a laboratory inter-comparison study for toxaphene, levels of toxaphene in tree bark around the U.S., limited PBDE (a flame-retardant chemical) measurements taken at IADN stations in 1997-1999, and emerging contaminant monitoring studies being conducted by Environment Canada. The group also discussed a wide range of topics on potential improvements to the cooperative monitoring network. (Contacts: Melissa Hulting, 312-886-2265, hulting.melissa@epa.gov and Todd Nettesheim, 312-353-9153, nettesheim.todd@epa.gov)

mental issues and water levels and withdrawals. Commissioner Schornack was briefed on the Great Lakes Strategy, as well as the key environmental challenges facing the Great Lakes, including invasive species, contaminated sediments, and habitat loss.

Commissioner Schornack was very informed on policy and environmental issues, coming from distinguished career in environmental and policy matters in the State of Michigan. This resulted in a very interesting and lively discussion on a wide spectrum of issues and ideas for making progress in restoring and protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem. More information on Commissioner Schornack is available on the IJC web site at: <http://www.ijc.org/news/april08.html>. (Contact: Gary Gulezian, 312-886-4040, gulezian.gary@epa.gov)

New U.S. IJC Commissioner



On April 17th, Deputy Regional Administrator Dave Ullrich and GLNPO hosted a get acquainted visit to Chicago by Dennis Schornack, the newly-appointed U.S. (International Joint Commission) Commissioner and Chair of the U.S. Section. The U.S.- Canada International Joint Commission, or IJC, deals with a range of matters affecting the two nations, including environ-

We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions about this month's Significant Activities Report. To be added to or removed from the Email distribution of the Significant Activities Report, please contact Tony Kizlauskas, 312-353-8773, kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov.